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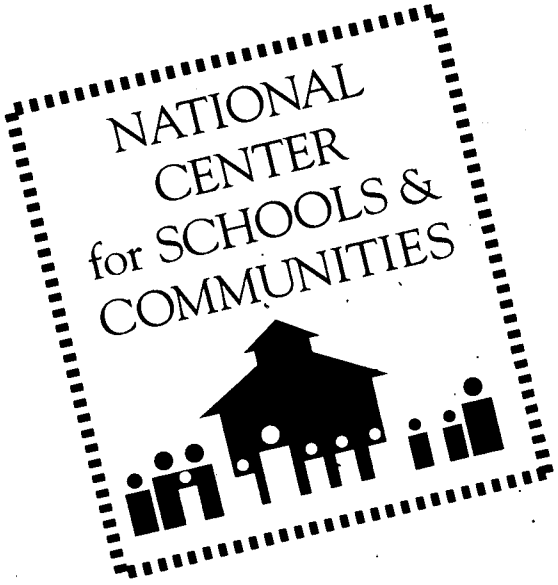
ABSTRACT

The full-service community school encompasses many concepts that derive from different domains--education, health, mental health, community development, youth development, human services--and these concepts are being implemented in diverse ways. Generally, the full-service community school integrates the delivery of quality education for children with whatever health, social, and cultural services are required in the community. This paper notes overlap between community schools and school-based services, describes variations of the community schools model across the country, and suggests actions for creating and supporting these schools. The article considers the community needs that motivate the development of these schools, as well as the success of the schools in meeting these needs. Contains 14 references. (JPB)

A Look at Community Schools in 1998

Occasional Paper #2

Joy G. Dryfoos



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February 1998

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Foreword

> In his *Philosophical Investigations*, Ludwig Wittgenstein poses an intriguing question — when does a town actually become a town? How many houses or streets does it take before a town feels like a town?...And when does it become *our town*?...As educators we might well ask, When does a school become a place — a place that is more than the sum of its routines, its rules, its schedules, its scores? When does it become a place where children feel they matter...And, most significantly for poor children, when does a school become their place, where they find acceptance and possibility? (Polakow, 1993, pp. 158-159)

The work of the National Center for Schools and Communities is not simply to *reform* schools, but to *transform* them into places that serve and respect the whole child and the child's family. The National Center works toward making this vision a reality through initiating and supporting community schools, monitoring and evaluating after-school programs, and spreading the word about community schools through conferences, publications, newsletters, and electronic communications.

The Center sustains a national network of universities, schools, and agencies seeking to enrich services provided in schools. The Center is also conducting an evaluation of after-school programs operated in elementary schools by the YMCA of Greater New York. In partnership with the Children's Aid Society, the National Center supports the development of new community schools across the country.

In 1997 the Center hosted a national Community Schools Summit, which brought together leaders in an emerging community schools movement and led to the formation of a coalition of organizations interested in broadening community school efforts. Joy Dryfoos, independent researcher and Fellow of the National Center for Schools and Communities, presented the keynote address. She is the author of two books that provide a foundation for the emerging community schools movement: *Full-Service Schools* and *Safe Passage: Making It Through Adolescence in a Risky Society* (1994 and 1998). In this "occasional paper" Dryfoos describes the variety of community schools across the country and suggests action.

Carolyn Denham, Ph.D.

Director

National Center for Schools and Communities

The mission of the National Center is to improve the education of children in poverty by initiating and sustaining joint action by universities, schools, community-based organizations, and families. The work of the National Center is supported by the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, the YMCA of Greater New York, the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, the Carnegie Corporation of New York and others. The National Center is an interdisciplinary organization within the Fordham University Graduate Schools of Social Service and Education.

A Look at Community Schools in 1998 is made possible by a grant from the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund. The mission of the Fund is to foster fundamental improvement in the quality of educational and career development opportunities for all school-age youth, and to increase access to these improved services for young people in low-income communities.

A Look At Community Schools in 1998

> In an effort to make a public school a full-service place for children and their parents, school and city officials here (in Newark, New Jersey) today unveiled the Camden Middle Community School, which would offer after-school programs for children as well as job training, family counseling and health and aerobics classes for their parents...By most accounts the program is unique...(*New York Times*, November 4, 1997)

What is a Full-Service Community School?

Unique maybe in Newark, New Jersey, but not around the country. So many new models of community schools and school-based services are being developed that it is hard to keep up with what is happening. The phrase *full-service community school* is not easily defined. It encompasses many concepts that derive from different domains — education, health, mental health, community development, youth development, human services — and these concepts are being implemented in diverse ways.

My own definition of a **full-service community school** integrates the delivery of quality education with whatever health, social, and cultural services are required in that community. This kind of institution draws on both school resources and outside community agencies that come into the school and join forces to provide "seamless", "one-stop" environments. In my ideal, a school principal and a program coordinator jointly administer what goes on. School buildings are open extended hours every day — before and after school, over weekends, and during the summer. Community "ownership" is an important aspect of community schools; the parents, the students, and all the people in the neighborhood feel welcome and are eager to participate.

This conceptualization of a community school is not new. It has roots in early progressive thinking about reforming social institutions. One might perceive of these emerging "settlement houses in schools" as a marriage between John Dewey and Jane Addams.

To understand what is happening, one needs to distinguish between comprehensive

full-service community schools and school-based or school-linked services. The former puts everything — education and human services — together into a unified institution. At this stage of program development, we have identified only a handful of schools that would meet my exacting definition of a full-fledged community school.

The definition of school-based or school-linked services is less restrictive. The idea is to add to or to enrich what is offered in the school building, but not necessarily to impact what goes on in the classroom. According to one analysis of 15 school-linked services initiatives, these programs provide services not traditionally offered on public school campuses (Shaw & Replogle, 1996). Another review identified 55 examples of school-linked services in six categories: parenting education, school readiness, and life skills; teen pregnancy prevention and parenting; dropout prevention; alcohol and drug prevention; integrated services bringing together programs from a variety of different agencies and addressing multiple risk factors; and parent involvement (Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1993). And this list does not include primary health and mental health services; community policing and violence prevention; sports, arts and cultural enrichment — all currently provided in schools through partnerships with community agencies.

Until recently, my favorite "add-on" was laundry facilities, supplied by a social service agency to a school to meet a specific need expressed by local families. Then I heard about the Sulzberger Middle School in Philadelphia where a community-oriented teacher hopes to work with the entire school-community to design, construct, and operate a miniature golf course in an adjacent vacant lot.

Variants of the Model

I tried to distinguish here between community schools and school-based programs, but the line between the two is blurred. At a certain point, the addition of programs to a school can begin to turn the whole school around in a kind of evolutionary process. What starts as an "add-on" becomes the catalyst for total school change. Here is my most recent compilation of the models and some of the people instrumental in creating them. (see also Dryfoos, 1998).

The Mott Foundation has been associated with the term Community Schools for more than

half a century. Beginning in 1935, the Foundation pioneered the **"lighted school-house"** in Flint, Michigan, and in many other places throughout the country, bringing extended-hour learning, recreation, and social activities into school buildings through the auspices of local education systems. It is estimated that 10,000 schools in the country have at one time or another adopted some aspect of this earlier model (Edwards & Biocchi, 1996). The National Center for Community Education, under the leadership of Dan Cady and Pat Edwards, continues to train people to implement programs oriented toward addressing community needs and facilitating lifelong learning for people of all ages (Edwards, 1997). In recent years, their orientation has shifted more toward transforming schools into community centers and the promotion of participatory planning for co-location of services in schools (Ringer & Decker, 1995).

A **"settlement house in the school"** approach has been created by the Children's Aid Society (CAS), in New York City, through the leadership of Phillip Coltoff and C. Warren (Pete) Moses (Children's Aid Society, 1997). This version both comprehends and integrates school restructuring and the provision of "one-stop" human services and cultural and recreational programs. It moves beyond reliance on the educational system and establishes partnerships with outside social service providers. School buildings house both family resource centers and primary health care clinics. The schools focus intensively on improving educational outcomes by offering integrated extended-day academic programs. Parents are seen as partners and participate extensively as volunteers, learners, and staff. The "settlement house in the school" serves families, siblings and others in the community.

A Technical Assistance Center has been organized by CAS under the direction of Rosa Agosto and is heavily utilized by hundreds of visitors. This model is being adapted in three cities (Boston, Salt Lake City, and Long Beach, California) in conjunction with the National Center for Schools and Communities at Fordham University. Support is being provided for these adaptations through the "Extended-Service Schools" initiative of the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, which also supports the Beacons and United Way models mentioned below. Using the CAS schools as a model, the Wilder Foundation is developing five community schools in St. Paul, Minnesota, in conjunction with the school system and other local and state public agencies.

University-assisted community schools are those with which universities establish formal relationships and sponsor a range of activities: university faculty work with teachers on curriculum and with school administrators on school restructuring; university students practice teach in schools and offer after-school activities. The Center for Community Partnerships of the University of Pennsylvania, directed by Ira Harkavy, is currently working to create more than a dozen comprehensive community schools in West Philadelphia (including Sulzberger Middle School), with community-oriented, problem-solving, curricula and extended hours for family involvement and service provision (Harkavy & Puckett 1991). This Center works with universities throughout the country to implement similar initiatives in their own communities. The National Center for Schools and Communities at Fordham University works with universities and public schools in ten cities across the country.

Hal Lawson and Katherine Briar-Lawson, now at the University of Utah, work to create what they call **"family-supportive community schools,"** models that place high priority on "two-generational" approaches that enhance the lives of the parents as well as the children.

Beacons, introduced in New York City when Richard Murphy was Commissioner of the City's Department of Youth Services, bring community-based organizations into schools to utilize the non-school hours for youth and community enrichment (Cahill, 1997). The result is not strictly a community school since the effect is largely outside of the classroom, but the model is viewed as one with great potential for establishing a strong base in a school from which changes can emanate. After the program is up and running and relationships established between school personnel and after-school staff, linkages can be instituted that integrate the different interventions. Each program is different, depending on the capabilities of the provider agencies and the particular cultural and socioeconomic needs of the community. The Beacon model is being replicated with technical assistance provided by Michelle Cahill, director of the Youth Development Institute of the Fund for the City of New York.

In San Francisco, a Beacon initiative will encompass eight to twelve school sites in the near future. This "locally-tailored vision" is jointly supported by the Mayor's Office, the School District, and the Evelyn & Walter Haas, Jr. Fund. A Community Network For Youth Development provides technical assistance and training.

United Way has launched several initiatives through hundreds of local affiliates to create partnerships with schools and other agencies for school-based programs. One model that is being replicated in nine sites is Bridges to Success. Developed in Indianapolis, it uses public school sites to deliver a wide array of United Way supported youth services, including educational and vocational enrichment. In Rochester and Westchester County, NY, the United Way is spearheading the drive toward full-service community schools.

Schools of the 21st Century link child care with family support centers. Created in 1987 by Edward Zigler, Director of the Bush Center at Yale University, this effort brings together school-based year-round all-day child care for children 3 to 5 years old, after-school and vacation care for school-age children, family support and guidance through a home visitation program for new parents, and other support services to increase access to child care. This model has now been linked with James Comer's **School Development Program** to create **COZI** schools that build on parent involvement, mental health teaming, and school climate changes through the middle school years. It is anticipated that the end product of this collaboration should produce community schools as defined above.

Other community schools are school-system-generated programs that work to develop partnerships with community agencies so that the agencies contribute or contract services. Some of the schools undergoing educational restructuring processes also bring in outside services to create community schools. Alternative and charter schools may encompass these same concepts. Alabama now uses education funds to support community schools, sustaining the initial Mott Foundation sponsored Birmingham model. Iowa supports many school districts for this purpose, and the districts also use their own funds for purchasing support services from community agencies. New York has a Community School Program that awards small grants to schools largely for coordination of services.

Many of the programs that bring outside services into schools were initiated by states. I first came across the term **Full-Service School** after Governor Lawton Chiles introduced Florida's

innovative legislation in 1991, calling for integration of education, medical and social services that are beneficial to children and their families in school buildings (Dryfoos, 1994).

Florida has supported hundreds of schools to bring service programs into their buildings that address an array of issues (Calfee & Wittwer, 1998). The funds for this innovative program have recently been merged with other funding with less emphasis on integrated services. California's Healthy Start program gives seed money to hundreds of schools to develop partnerships with health and human services agencies. Some of the schools in both states have evolved into full-service community schools. The Province of Ontario Ministry of Education and Training supports the concept of full-service schools, as well (Rusk, Shaw & Joong 1994).

Caring Communities is a program that brings community-developed services and support into schools. In this model, neighborhood councils act as fiscal intermediaries between state agencies and the school-based programs. The state of Missouri is supporting replications in at least 65 schools. Grantees are being encouraged to integrate their efforts with school reform. In Kansas City, these programs are known as Comprehensive Neighborhood Services, a process that leads to the delivery of multi-disciplinary services through neighborhood linkages with local schools. This effort is operated under the auspices of the unique Kansas City agency, LINC (Local Investment Commission), which provides planning, training, technical assistance and support to school sites through development coordinators.

Communities-in-Schools (formerly Cities-in-Schools) is a national organization that works with close to 300 local communities (businesses, social service agencies) as a broker to relocate social workers and other staff into 1,025 schools so they can act as case managers and mentors. Organized by William Milliken, this Washington-based enterprise has provided technical assistance and training and arranged for government support for targeted projects.

School-based youth centers are facilities in school buildings usually operated by outside agencies where services other than health are provided, such as after-school recreation and mentoring, employment services, substance abuse counseling, and group counseling. In some communities, schools

are used as the location for Boys and Girls Clubs, the Police Athletic League, Girls Inc, and 4H after-school programs. In many others, the local recreation commission runs activities in the gym. The New Jersey School-Based Youth Services Program, under the direction of Edward Tetelman, was the pioneer in this field. It now supports 29 diverse programs throughout the state that bring services into schools to prevent dropout, teen pregnancy, substance abuse, and to foster employment.

Family resource centers are facilities located in schools or community sites where parents can come for parenting education, literacy, employment assistance, immigration information, housing help, food, clothing, case management, health services, and early child care. Programs specifically for teenage parents are frequently located in these kinds of centers. Connecticut and Colorado have initiatives to support school-based family resource centers.

School-based coordinating centers are family or youth centers where the school receives a grant to hire a coordinator who facilitates health and social service referrals to community agencies. Selected services such as parent education and employment counseling are provided on site. Kentucky has more than 500 of these sites.

School-based health clinics are facilities operated in school buildings by outside health agencies, staffed by medical personnel, providing primary health care, emergency care, mental health counseling, health promotion, and education. About half of the states directly support school-based clinics, currently operating in about 1,000 schools.

School-based mental health programs can be provided through primary health clinics or as a separate piece that brings in counselors and psychologists. Student Assistance programs bring in substance abuse counselors and Social Competency programs with specialized curricula and activities. Howard Adelman and Linda Taylor, directors of the Center for Mental Health in Schools (UCLA), have worked with school systems to implement the Enabling Component, a comprehensive set of programs and services that enable schools to teach, students to learn, families to function, and communities to serve and protect. Marc Weist directs a similar Center for School Mental Health at the University of Maryland.

A complete inventory of school-based programs would be very extensive. You can bring anything into a school as long as the principal approves and you bring in your own financial resources. Arts in the schools, museum, environmental, and science projects are proliferating. Business, industry, churches, and media also are involved in partnerships with schools. But clearly just moving services into a new location is not sufficient. In my view, the more the services are integrated into the total school environment, the more effective they will be. We will have access to another document in the near future that will help clarify the definitional problems: Martin Blank, of the Institute for Educational Leadership is working in conjunction with the Mott Foundation on a Community School Mapping project that will describe 20 initiatives and summarize key lessons that emerge regarding organization and outcomes.

What's Driving All This Activity?

Why are so many people in different parts of the country coming together to create community schools? What is motivating state governments and foundations to create these new kinds of institutional arrangements that put together schools and community agencies? Picture the various social movements of our time: preparing children to learn, moving families off welfare and out of poverty, finding child care spaces for working parents, improving access to health care, preventing adolescents from getting involved in high risk behaviors, and promoting youth development. Add those efforts to the drive toward educational reform and you begin to see where this movement to create one-stop school/community ventures arises. Not only that, observe the effects of cutting back public resources for social programs and you begin to understand why concerned practitioners are beginning to form partnerships and to learn how to use scarce funds more efficiently.

Connecting these movements together provides the argument for full-service community schools (Denham & Etzioni, 1997). Schools are where most of the young people can be found. Schools are where most of the families can establish contact with the people who educate their children and where they can obtain the help they need to be effective parents. If we could produce quality education at one site along with access to requisite health, mental health, social,

and cultural services for children and families, both educational and psycho-social outcomes should be better (Zigler, Kagan & Hall 1996). Of course, accomplishing this will require major changes in the educational, health, and human services establishments in the way they relate to each other and conduct their business.

But Do They Work?

I wish I could give an unequivocal "yes" to this question. I have to report a strong "maybe". A full-service community school in all its glory is a pretty complex institution and difficult to evaluate (Shaw & Replogle, 1995). The logical place to start is with test scores. However, since community schools tend to be located in disadvantaged neighborhoods, the turnover of students can be as high as 50 percent in one year, making it difficult to measure changes in the total school population. The new students coming in are often from even more deprived environments than other children, some drawn to the school because it provides extra services. Under these conditions, aggregate test scores may decrease. Random assignment is not feasible in school settings and finding and maintaining control groups arduous and expensive.

Despite these problems, evaluation is definitely underway for many of the community schools and school-based models identified above (Evaluation Exchange, 1997). A number of researchers are involved in this emerging field.

Children's Aid Society in New York: Fordham University

Community Schools in St. Paul: Wilder Foundation

Beacons in New York City: Academy for Educational Development

Beacons in San Francisco: Public/Private Ventures and SRI

West Philadelphia schools: University of Pennsylvania

Caring Communities in Missouri: Philliber Associates

Bridges to Success in Indianapolis: Philliber Associates

United Way in Rochester: Evaluator to be announced

DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund Extended-Services School Initiative: Evaluator to be announced

Gardner Elementary School, Boston: Boston College Center for the Study of Testing, Evaluation and Educational Policy

New Jersey School-Based Program: Academy for Educational Development

Early returns from a few places are encouraging. Data from Children's Aid Society's elementary school PS 5 and middle school IS 218 indicate that reading and math performance has improved compared to other schools in the community school district (Coltoff, 1997). Seventy percent of parents use the Family Resource Center. Attendance rates have climbed, and suspensions and school violence rates have declined significantly. At the Turner Community School in Philadelphia, the attendance rate improved substantially, more than in comparable schools, and suspensions decreased significantly (Dryfoos, 1998). Parents were increasingly involved in the school, reflecting changes in attitudes on the part of both parents and teachers. According to the Turner staff, "The whole building feels different." Effects on the Penn students who participate as volunteers should be measured as well. Amy Cohen, associate director of Penn Program for Public Service, told me, "Penn students get a whole new understanding of the world."

The Marshalltown, Iowa, Caring Connection community school showed a reduction in the dropout rate and evidence of attracting former dropouts back into the school system. Among students who were at high risk of dropping out, those who made more than 25 contacts during the year with Caring Connection had a dropout rate of 3 percent compared to 8 percent among those with few contacts (Dryfoos, 1998). A survey of students and parents showed very positive assessments of the program and the school, with 75 percent or more reporting better attendance and performance in school, reduction in use of substances, going to college, not engaging in unprotected sex, and improved relationships with peers and family.

Much more research has been done on add-on models such as school-based primary health clinics and mental health services. The details can be found in other places (Dryfoos, Brindis, & Kaplan, 1997) but in general, it can be said that the school-based clinics provide

significant access to health services for disadvantaged students, reduce absences and the use of expensive emergency rooms, and are heavily utilized. Data on the impact on behavioral outcomes is limited. It appears that in school-clinics that emphasize pregnancy prevention, targeted students reduce their high risk behaviors. Where substance abuse prevention is the focus, clinic-based counseling has an effect. Few school-clinics have been shown to change the total school environment. They are very effective at helping the students with the most problems who also use the facilities most frequently.

The emerging literature on community schools and school-based programs is rich in anecdotal data, with many stories of transformed lives and satisfied students, parents, teachers, and community leaders. Documentation of the process of implementation of school/community efforts is abundant, showing the importance of planning, communication, negotiation of turf issues, cross-disciplinary training, clarification of policies and practices, and, of course, adequate funding (Ringers & Decker 1995). Everyone concurs that effective school/community partnerships are time-consuming and require a lot of patience.

My personal observation of new community schools is that they are extremely "people-dependent". As one participant described it, "when I get a new idea that might make this place better, I just go ahead and try it." Many of the leaders in this field perceive of themselves as "change agents" and are willing to commit themselves to the arduous task of trying to convince their colleagues to institute new ways of working with children in the classroom as well as involving parents in the whole school community.

Community schools and other varieties of school-based programs are proliferating rapidly. Throughout the country, advocates for the causes of school reform, youth development, social services integration, and child care are coming together to develop partnerships. Selected states and foundations have stimulated these actions and now, the federal government has begun to respond to the demands from the local level for support of these types of integrated programs.

Afterword

Advocates for community schools agree that it is time to "go to scale". Enough is known about these models to warrant wide replication. Most of the people mentioned above came together in May of 1997 for what was billed as the First Summit on Community Schools, an event organized by the National Center for Schools and Communities under the direction of Carolyn Denham, held at Fordham University in New York City.

Six months have passed since the First Summit. Now we are trying to make inroads into school reform circles and create national visibility for these creative school-community models. An "Emerging Coalition for Community Schools" has been organized. The Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington is coordinating the work with representatives from the Children's Aid Society, Center for Community Partnerships (University of Pennsylvania), Fordham University's National Center for Schools and Communities, DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, the Fund for the City of New York, National Center for Community Education, and me (I am independent). We recognize that when a community school is created at the local level, the first order of business is to form a planning committee made up of all the interested potential partners. Now we need to do the same thing across the country. We want to enlist educators, social service agencies, youth development and advocacy programs, human resource organizations, universities, foundations, public administration groups, legislators, and others, in a movement to broadly replicate community schools. It is time to turn a good idea into an ongoing sustained effort with national reach and implications.

This is clearly an evolutionary process. As new groups come into the Coalition, the functions will undoubtedly change. Initially, I would expect the following five activities to take place:

- Networking
    - Building the constituency for community schools.
    - Putting advocates and practitioners in touch with each other.
    - Organizing a National Conference on Community Schools.

- Information Dissemination and Public Education
    - Producing and distributing newsletters and other materials to describe current efforts.
    - Using Website (www.nccenet.org) of National Center for Community Education.
    - Encouraging community schools to get media coverage.
- Public Policy
    - Building a coalition of community organizations committed to establishing partnerships with public schools.
    - Getting community schools onto the national education, human services, and urban agenda.
    - Tracking relevant federal legislation (such as recent Schools of the 21st Century — $40 million for after-school programs).
    - Documenting effective state initiatives such as Missouri's Caring Communities and Iowa's Community Schools.
- Training and Development
    - Advocating for specific training of principals and coordinators of community schools
- Research and Evaluation
    - Stimulating the documentation of community school models.
    - Collecting and analyzing data on effectiveness.
    - Creating a National Directory of Community Schools.

For further information, keep in touch with the National Center for Schools and Communities at Fordham University. I truly believe that we have launched a new movement that can lead to wide-scale replication. We will see new kinds of school/community institutions with the capacity to respond to the needs of children and families in the twenty-first century.

Joy G. Dryfoos
February 1998

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